

Students attitudes towards violation of academic integrity

Summary

Academic dishonesty is a common phenomenon in the Polish and international educational reality, occurring at every level of education - from primary school to university. It is estimated that about 80% of pupils and students obtain grades in a way that violates the integrity of science, and this applies to many forms of cheating: presenting someone else's work as your own, cheating during exam, sharing your solutions, plagiarizing, buying essays from paper mills, etc.

The subject of theoretical analyzes and empirical research presented in this paper was academic dishonesty, discussed in the context of students' attitudes towards this phenomenon. In the research process, a three-factor definition of attitude was explored, which includes the cognitive dimension (i.e. knowledge about academic dishonesty), the affective dimension (emotional attitude towards cheating) and the behavioral dimension (engaging in dishonest practices).

The analysis of the results of the research described in the paper allowed to diagnose the students attitudes towards violating academic dishonesty, taking into account the three components contained in these attitudes: cognitive, emotional and behavioral, represented respectively by the factors of pragmatic rationalization, moral self-reflection and moral functioning. For this purpose, the Attitude Scale for Violation of Academic Integrity – SPNA was developed and used in the study. The aim of the study was also to determine some subjective and / or objective factors in shaping these attitudes towards academic dishonesty.

The first part of the work is theoretical and presents the current theoretical concepts and literature as well as current empirical data on academic dishonesty and attitudes.

The second part of the work presents the methodological concept of the research based on psychological and pedagogical knowledge. This part begins with the presentation of the purpose and research model. Then, the problems and research hypotheses were defined. Furthermore, the variables included in the research were presented along with their definitions and operationalization. Dependent variables were operationalized using a newly built SPNA scale, hence this section presents the results of factor analysis, validity and reliability of the scale as part of the description of the pilot studies. The research methods were also presented

and the group of people subjected to the research procedure was described (1008 students participated in the study, but only 761 were included in the analysis).

The third part of this work covers the analysis and interpretation of research results along with the answer to the research questions and hypotheses. The paper ends with a discussion of the results, which presents the interpretation of the discussed research results in relation to the literature on the subject and the empirical data available. As a result of the analyzes, it was found that: in terms of the cognitive component (the factor of pragmatic rationalization), young people present positive and ambivalent beliefs about academic dishonesty. The emotional component (the moral self-reflection factor) indicated the lack of acceptance for violating academic integrity. The students also declared an ambivalent and positive repertoire of behaviors related to engaging in unfair practices. A detailed statistical analysis shows that the general attitudes of students towards violating academic integrity are mostly ambivalent and positive. They also show consistency within the three main components of an attitude: cognitive, emotional and behavioral, which means that there is a correlation between the three components mentioned. Analyzes of mediation and moderation were also conducted in order to recognize the determinants of attitudes. The results varied according to gender, year of study, and grade level. These relations were not modified by many other personality factors, such as the level of dependence on reward, transcendence, perseverance, cooperation, enthusiasm for learning or satisfaction.

In conclusion, the limitations of this research were analyzed and the possible directions of future analyzes were indicated. The conducted research established that there is a chance to build a culture of integrity by: pointing to the principles of honesty, increasing student awareness, discussing expectations clearly and openly, and enforcing academic standards.